

in England
More REASONS Humbly Offer'd to the Honourable House of Commons, for the BILL for Encouraging Learning, and for Securing Property of Copies of Books to the Rightful Owners thereof.

THIS Honourable House, in its Great Wisdom and Justice, having always afforded Relief, by agreeing to New Laws, where the Old Ones have been defective, in all reasonable Cases; We cannot doubt, that in this, where that most distinguishing Quality of Mankind [Learning] is so nearly concern'd, the Honourable Members of it will fail to extend their usual Beneficence.

The Subject of our Request is, That You would be pleased to strengthen the Common Law, in our Case, as preceding Parliaments have, in very many others, at divers times. For whereas, by Common Law, we can recover no more Costs, than we can prove Damage; and the Damage we sustain, being always vastly more than we can prove; We desire you will assign such Punishment upon Delinquents, as in Your Great Wisdom You shall think fit.

We Hope, that we have the Common Law on our Side. We know that what we desire, is what is granted by the Sovereign Power in all other Nations. And we presume, that the Publick has never suffer'd Inconvenience by the Enjoyment of this Right, which we have possess'd, by apparent Evidence, ever since the Incorporation of the Trade: At least no Inconvenience has ever appear'd. For the reducing correct and well-printed Sermons, into ill-printed Penny-Sheets, the best Effect of the New Liberty, is, perhaps, by no means so great a Convenience, as to warrant a Liberty that will, in the End, totally discourage Good Printing in this Nation; which is so well cultivated among us of late Years, as to deserve the Protection of Authority. And that the continuance of this Liberty must necessarily discourage Good Printing, will appear very evident, when 'tis consider'd, that the Printing a Book well, do's unavoidably require a very great Expence of Money; when, at the same time, that very Book may be Printed Vilely, for a Sixth Part of the Charge; which gives so great an advantage to a Counterfeiter, that if the Practice be permitted to continue, no Bookseller must dare to Print a fair Edition of any, tho' the most useful, Book. And besides, an Author's Work is expos'd to mangled and corrupt Editions, which is the more fatal since the use of Printing; because the Copies of a corrupt Edition, are vastly more multiplied by that Art, than it was possible to be by Manuscripts.

As to the common Argument of Cheapness, we presume to say, that we do, in all Cases that will admit of it, sell our Books as cheap as any Nation in the World: But it would be unreasonable to require us to sell a Book, the Copy whereof cost us 50, 60, or 100 l. as cheap as another Man do's one, whose Copy cost nothing. And it cannot be said, we are Fools to give so much for a Copy, without saying also, that Authors are such to Spend their whole Time, Years after Years, in composing a useful Book.

But it is said, That it is sufficient for us to enjoy a Term of Years in our Sole Right of Printing. To this we Answer, That if we have a Right for Ten Years, we have a Right for Ever. A Man's having possess'd a Property for Ten or Twenty Years, is in no other Instance allow'd, a Reason for another to take it from him; and we hope it will not be in Ours. But farther, the Reason assign'd for this Breach upon our Property, is Fallacious; for, whereas 'tis said, we get enough in the first Ten or Fourteen Years, to compensate all Charge and Hazard: Upon Examination that will be often found untrue; for many excellent Books, which cost the Authors many Years Labour, do not become so well known, as to make a good vent, for Ten, nay Twenty Years, after Publication. Sir *Walter Raleigh's* Excellent History, did not become valu'd all his Life-time. The very Excellent Treatise, *The Whole Duty of Man*, was hardly known for the first Three or Four Years, and yeilded no Profit in its Sale for several Years after. Sir *I. Newton's Princip. Math. Naturalis Philosophiæ*, was at least Ten Years in gaining a knowledge in the World. And innumerable are the Instances of Books, that lie unknown for many Years, altho' they are at last found to be admirably useful to Mankind. And why, when a Book do's become known and useful, the proper Proprietor may not have the Benefit of the Sale of it, we cannot see any Reason.

If Books were as generally necessary, as Food and Raiment; or if the Holy Scriptures, or other the most useful Books, were so loaded with Price, that the Poor could not come at 'em, there might be Reason for this Plea: But in this Age, when Books in general are a third Part at least, if not half in half, cheaper than they were a Hundred Years ago, and have been growing daily cheaper for these Fifty Years past, we presume this Argument should not be now rais'd. And lest it should be said, that this Reduction of Price is owing to the Liberty of late; give us leave to Answer, That the greatest Instances of cheapness known in the World, the *Dictionary*, and the *Dauphin Classics*, were brought to that State, under the Protection of an Act of Parliament, much more severe to Offenders of it, than that we now ask.